

ENGLISH

Grammar: Tenses



Tenses

What are Tenses?

Tense is something which tells us **when** the action expressed by the verb **took place**. There are three main divisions of tenses.

- **Past Tense:** The past tense is used to talk about **actions** which took place in the **past**.

They **sang** Christmas carols.

Anshul **was watching** cartoons.

Rahul **had read** all the works of Shakespeare.

Tim **had been working** non-stop for 10 hours.



- **Present Tense:** The present tense is used to talk about **actions** which take place in the **present**.

The cat **yowls** every night.

Diane **is leaving** now.

Vilas **has cooked** lunch for us.

The house **has been lying** unattended.



- **Future Tense:** The future tense is used to talk about actions which will take place in the future.

Hansel and Gretel **will visit** the Gingerbread House.

Farid **will be sleeping**.

The food **will have been** spoilt.

Craters **would have been forming** on the surface of the planet.



Present Tense

The present tense can be divided into three sub-categories:

1. Simple
2. Continuous
3. Perfect

Simple Present Tense

Examples of sentences in the simple present tense:

Habitual actions

Rishabh **ris**es at 7 every day.

Grandpa **feed**s the pigeons.



Events of the near future

I **go** shopping today.

My train **leaves** at 12.



Ability

Gaurav **run**s very fast.

Jayanti **speaks** French.



Facts

The Earth **is** the third planet from the Sun.

Chemistry **is** the study of the composition of matter.



Opinions and words of wisdom

Samantha **is** the rudest girl I have known.

All that glitters **is** not gold.



Simple present tense on a timeline:



Now

Simple Present Tense

Ideas which are generally true.

Present Continuous Tense

- The **present continuous tense** is used to express actions which are currently in progress.
- Progressive helping verbs (is, am, are) are used along with the '-ing' form of the verb.


Helping Verbs	Main Verb (-ing form)
is	eating
are	lying

Examples of sentences in the present continuous tense:

Actions which are in progression

The cat **is lapping** water.


Meena **is cooking** food.



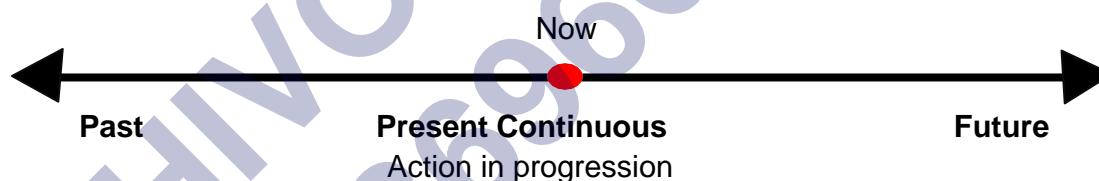
Near future

I **am going** on a treasure hunt tomorrow.

Preeti **is going** home tonight.



Present continuous tense on a timeline:

Present Perfect Tense

- The **present perfect tense** is used to express an action which may have happened at a specific time before now.
- Perfect helping verbs (**has, have**) are used with the past participle form of the verb.

Helping Verbs	Main Verb (Past Participle)
has	reported
have	listened

- The present perfect tense is never used when the time or date of the action is mentioned.
 - The milkman has delivered the milk in the morning. *Incorrect*
 - The milkman delivered the milk in the morning. *Correct*

Examples of sentences in the present perfect tense:

Recently completed action

The ninja **has emerged** from the shadows.

The milk **has gone** cold.



When the time of completion is unspecified

Rama **has baked** a pie.

Sanjay **has flown** a plane.



A past action which is still in continuation

The villain **has plotted** against the girls from the beginning.

Chris **has waited** for hours.

Changes which have happened over time

Gregory's face **has aged** with time.

Gradually, you **have achieved** what you wanted to.

When the consequences are more important than the action itself

It **has rained** for three days. (it's flooded)

She **has trimmed** the last leaf. (no leaves left)

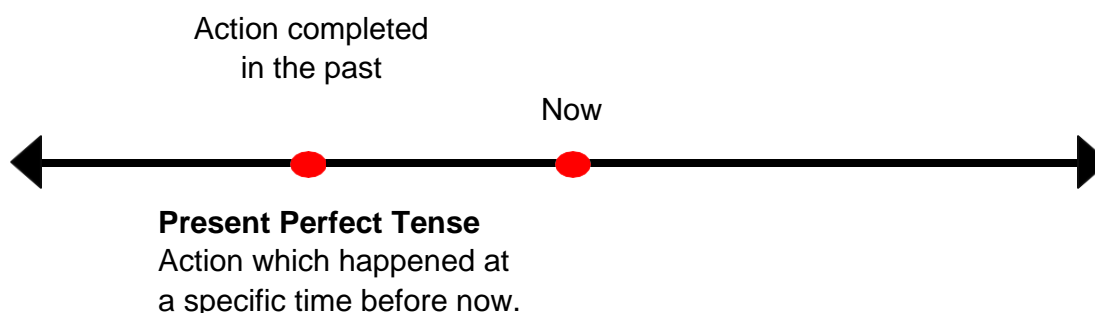
A past action whose benefits can be felt to this day

I **have taken** some pills; I feel better already.

Rob has **fixed** an air conditioner in his room; **he** is not afraid of summer anymore.



Present perfect tense on a timeline:



Past Tense

The past tense can be divided into four sub-categories:

1. Simple
2. Continuous
3. Perfect
4. Perfect continuous

Simple Past Tense

- The **simple past tense** is used to express an action which was completed at one point of time in the past.

Examples of sentences in the simple past tense:

Completed actions

Gerald **wore** a blue suit.

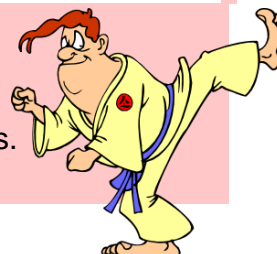
Tarun **had** a delicious lunch.



Habitual actions of the past

Fred **practised** martial arts.

Deepak **went** for evening walks.



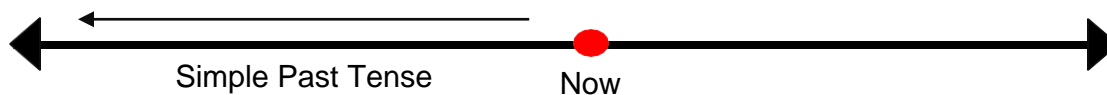
Past facts or generalisations

Greek warriors **were** some of the finest warriors of their time.

The jesters **amused** the courtiers.



Simple past tense on a timeline:



Past Continuous Tense

- The **past continuous tense** is used to express actions which were in progression at one point of time in the past.
- It is formed when progressive helping verbs (was, were) are added to the '-ing' form of the main verb.

Helping Verb	Main Verb (-ing)
was	doing
were	talking

Continuing actions of the past

The dog **was juggling** balls on a unicycle.

The businessman **was talking** to his associate on the phone.

To mention the action of longer duration while comparing two actions

The children **were playing** when their mom returned home.

I was sleeping when the phone rang.

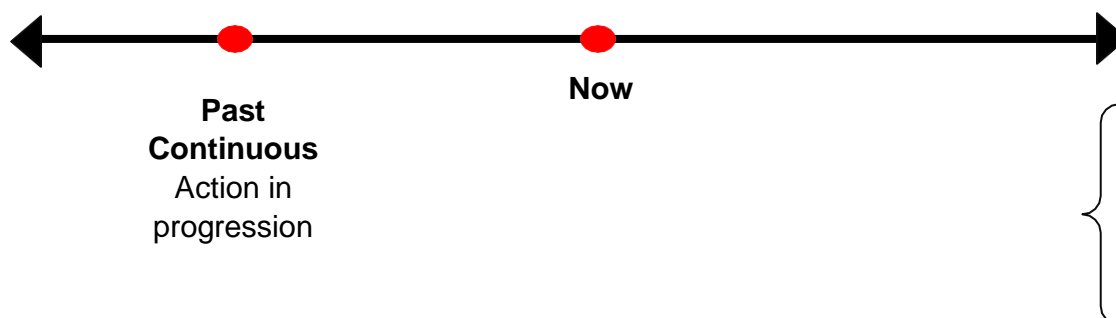
To talk about a progressive action in a narrative

The raven **was sitting** atop a tree.

The monk **was observing** the man in silence.



Past continuous tense on a timeline:



Past Perfect Tense

- The **past perfect tense** is used to express an action which may have happened at a specific time before another action began in the past.
- The perfect helping verb (had) is used with the past participle form of the verb.

Helping Verbs	Main Verb (Past Participle)
had	Started
had	Gone

Examples of sentences in the past perfect tense:

Action completed in the past before another action began

I **had just baked** a cake when the guests arrived.

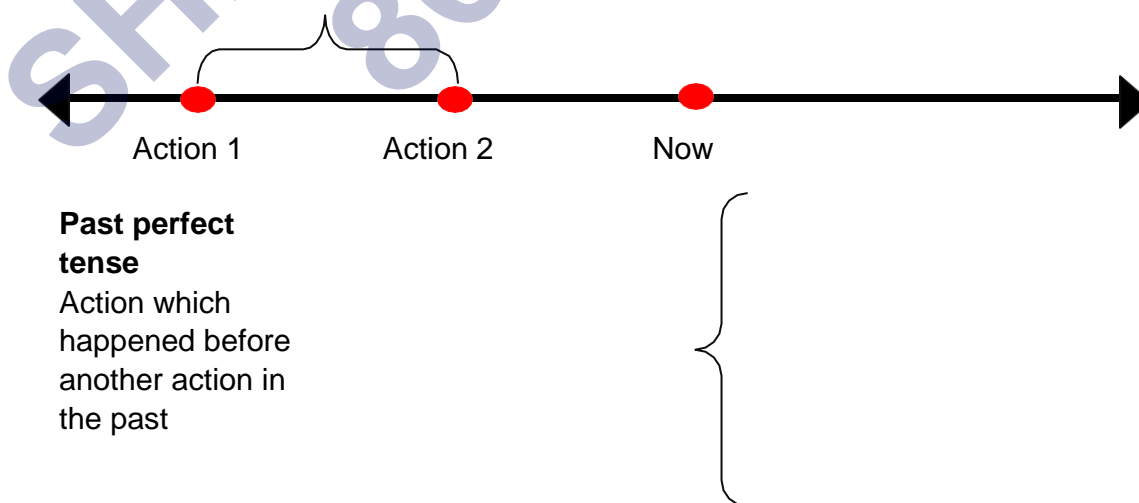
Neha **had just ordered** a pizza when the bell rang.

To change from direct speech to reported speech

Suresh said, "I have a dog."
Suresh said that he **had had** a dog.

Grace stated, "I read the book."
Grace stated that she **had read** the book.

Past perfect tense on a timeline:



Past Perfect Continuous Tense

- The **past perfect continuous tense** is used to express an action which may have started at a particular point of time in the past and may have ended at another point of time in the past.
- It is formed out of the addition of the perfect helping verb (**had**) to the participle form of progressive helping verbs (**been**) and finally to the '-ing' form of the main verb.

Helping Verb	Helping Verb (Participle form)	Main Verb (-ing)
had	been	buying
had	been	playing

Examples of sentences in the past perfect continuous tense:

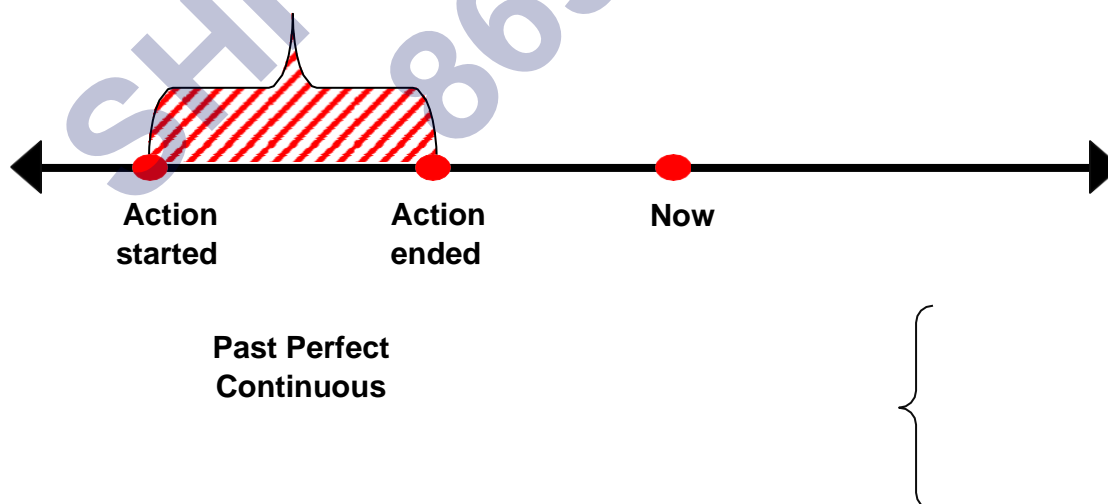
An action which may have started and may have gone on for a while in the past

They **had been watching** television.

Swapnil **had been fishing**.



Past perfect continuous tense on a timeline:



Future Tense

The future tense can be divided into four sub-categories:

1. Simple
2. Continuous
3. Perfect
4. Perfect continuous

Simple Future

- The simple future tense is formed by adding the modal auxiliaries '**will**' or '**would**' to the simple present tense of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Main verb
will	leave
would	come

Events of the future

There **will be** a puppet show.

Winter **will be** here soon.

Consequences of present actions

If you don't preheat the oven, you **will burn** the bread.

If the sailors are not careful, stowaways **may** get into the ship.

Expressing promise or a plan

We **will open** the presents in the morning.

I **will introduce** you to my business associate.

Future facts or habitual actions

Neha **will board** the train to Jaipur tomorrow.

He **will be crowned** the king of England.

Simple future tense on a timeline:



Future Continuous Tense

- The **future continuous tense** is formed by adding the modal auxiliaries '**will**' or '**would**' and the progressive helping verb '**be**' to the '**-ing**' form of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Progressive Helping Verb	Main verb
will	be	going
would	be	breaking

Examples of sentences in the future continuous tense:

Future events which will be in continuation

I **will be writing** the exam at this time today.

Carol and Gerald **would be driving** their car home right now.

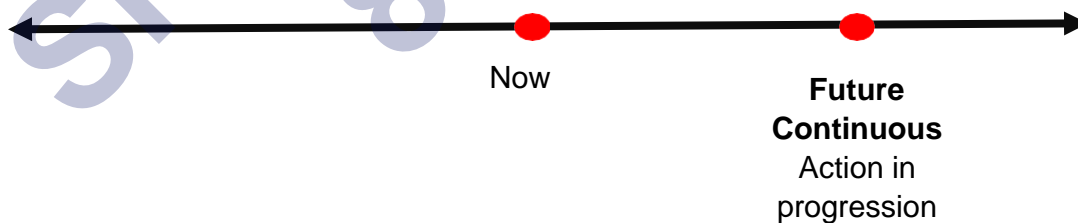
Talk about future events or plans

Rajesh **will be working** for us.

We **will be making** Christmas pudding.



Future continuous tense on a timeline:



Future Perfect Tense

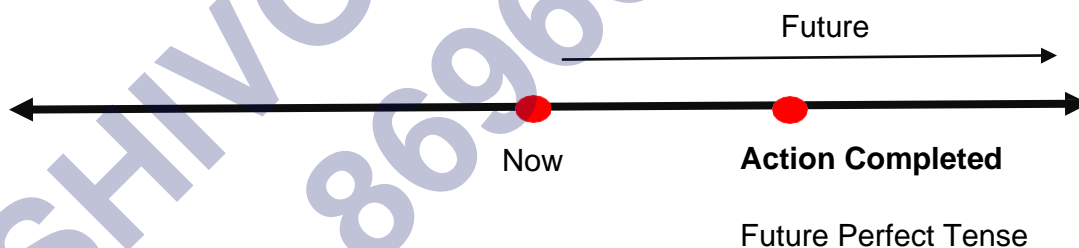
- The **future continuous tense** is formed by adding the modal auxiliaries '**will**' or '**would**' and the perfect helping verb '**have**' to the participle form of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Perfect Helping Verb	Participle Form of Main verb
will	have	eaten
would	have	taken

Future events which will be completed on or by a particular time

Danish **would have sent** the letter by tomorrow.

All the food in the pantry **will have depleted** by the end of the week if we don't replenish it.

**Future Perfect Continuous Tense**

- The **future perfect continuous tense** is formed by the addition of the modal auxiliaries (will or would); perfect helping verb (have); the past participle form of a progressive helping verb (been); and the present participle (-ing) form of the main verb.

Modal Auxiliary	Perfect Helping Verb	Past Participle Form of Progressive Helping Verb	Present Participle Form of Main Verb
will	have	been	talking
would	have	been	sleeping

Examples of sentences in the future perfect continuous tense:

An action which will start at a particular point in the future and continue up to another point

Janet **will have been sleeping** for 15 hours straight by 8 am tomorrow.

Girish **would have been working** as an electrical engineer for fifteen years by 2015.

Duration before something happens in the future

Toto **would have been gnawing** at the bone for two hours before I give him something to eat.

Sajid **will have been talking** to Apurva for half an hour before Rahul calls.



A cause for something in the future

Rashid would be exhausted since he **will have been working** without a break.

My French will improve as I **would have been learning** it for two years intensively.

Future perfect continuous tense on a timeline:

